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AUTHOR Rodby, Judith
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ABSTRACT

This book attempts to counter the fears of many native English speakers and educators that the recent surge of speakers of English as a Second Language (ESL) into U.S. universities and U.S. society as a whole represents a threat to the integrity of U.S. pedagogy and culture. More specifically, the book wrestles with the questions: What does it mean to write and read in a second language? The first of six chapters explores the evolving definitions of literacy in the field of ESL. Chapter 2 focuses on social meanings of ESL literacy, discussing how ESL literacy involves cultural, social, and political action. The third chapter outlines a dialectical theory of ESL literacy as a social act. Chapter 4 presents Carlos Bulosan's autobiography, "America Is in the Heart," as an illustration of the dialectics discussed in Chapter 3. The connections between theory and practice are elaborated in chapter 5 through a discussion of the teaching practices that have been shaped by a social perspective on ESL literacy. And finally, chapter 6 examines the ways in which teachers construct meaning out of nonnative prose. (Contains 180 references.) (LB)

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